

## A RAILWAY MAIL CLERK

By OY WARREN.

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Railway mail clerks are not railway employees, although they are under the orders of the railway officials when on the road. They are, as a class, a bright lot of men. They bring more brains and acquired skill into their work than any class of the government employees. In proportion to the amount of money they draw, they ride the fastest trains in the country, and ride ahead. On most roads their car is coupled to the locomotive and they take whatever is left when the grain reaper has finished with the engine.

Reliable statistics show that the mortality among railway mail clerks through railroad accidents is greater than that among the troops in the civil war. These clerks are required to pass an examination at a rating of more than 90 per cent. Department employees at Washington are given 20 days' vacation each year, but the railway mail clerk is called upon to face the dangers of midnight rides 12 months in the year. I knew one mail clerk intimately and found him one of the most interesting characters I ever met. The story of his eventful life would be interesting at any time, and ought to be especially so here as an illustration of the character of the average railway mail clerk and of the dangers through which he passes.

The farms in Illinois upon which we were reared were not far apart, but "Doc," who lived with his uncle, left home before he was 21 and went west. I had been in town to get the plow sharpened and on my way home I saw Doc climbing across a cloudy field behind a harrow, and he hailed me. When he came out he hung his chin over the top of the fence and said: "I'm going west. Will you fine me?"

"What's it to cost?" I asked. "Forty-nine dollars, second class, from St. Louis to Denver."

"Have you got the money?" Doc shook his head.

"Did you ever see that much money?"

"Well, not at one look, but I've got it all figured out."

"How much have you got?"

"Haven't got any, but I got a job at Whitte's stable in Carr street, and if you'll go I'll see that you never want."

"How'll we get to St. Louis?" I asked.

"Ride when we're tired of walking, and walk when we can't ride," was his reply.

"I'm going west. Will you fine me?"

"I'll fine you in the silk and you're in the tassel," he added thoughtfully.

"Life is all before us, but you can't get anywhere on a farm. Look at some of the folks around here. What do they know? They simply stand round on one foot like a mule and let the board break through the freckles, and then they push the old folks out and take the plow, and in a little while get pushed out themselves. Life on a farm is one continual round of work and want. Will you fine me?"

The thought of getting up at morning and not knowing where I was going to sleep at night frightened me, and I told Doc so and we parted.

A few years later, in the dawning of the morning, as I was climbing out of an upper berth at another mountain town a man caught hold of my coat-tail, and I found that the "man under my bed" was Doc Pippin. He said he was living in Denver; so was I, and in a few days he came in to see me. He came often, and told the best stories I had ever heard. He was thin and pale, and I noticed that he coughed and pounded his left lung when he did so.

Doc went to Chicago and became acquainted with a well known detective. He was offered employment, accepted it and was sent at once to a small town in Illinois to find out a band of thieves who were stealing hogs and robbing shops. If Doc had tried, he could never have become a good dresser. Even clothes that were made for him didn't fit, and he wore his hat crooked, like the leading man at a French funeral. His appearance upon this occasion was in his favor, and he was not long in forming the acquaintance of the toughest lot of loafers in the town. They liked Doc, as every one did who knew him, but it was a long time before they would trust him. Doc's money gave out, and he tried to borrow, and the gang gave him the laugh. "Get out and turn a trick," said one of the men.

"What can I do? Show me and then watch me," said Doc.

"See that lay ridin' out of town?" said the tough, nodding down the road where a lone horseman was going away with the sunset on his back.

"Well, he's got out to his place in the country—goes every Saturday night and comes back Monday—'im up?"

Doc knew the man, as he knew nearly every man in the place, by the description given him at Chicago, and by the middle of the following week this wealthy citizen had been notified from headquarters that he would be held up on the next Saturday night.

Doc was at his post, and as the lone horseman came down the road the highwayman stopped out from the shadows of a jack oak and covered his man. That night the gang drank up the best part of \$25.00 and voted Doc "a dead game toucher."

The verandah of the gang he had to deal with made Doc's work comparatively easy. He invariably brought

you don't believe that grocers sell Fels-Naptha soap at 5c a bar, and return the 5c to those who ask for it—try one.

It washes with half the usual labor.

and water, and by a simple trick that a child ought to have detected—the trick of drinking the water and leaving the gin—he was always sober.

When the proceeds of Doc's raid had been expended together with the \$7 received for the "lay's" watch, the gang determined to rob a hardware store. The job had been undertaken once, but had failed. This time arrived, the store was entered and when they were all in Doc ducked down behind the counter and reached the rear end of the store. Now a big bull's eye was turned upon the gang, who arose from their work to look down the dark barrels of a half dozen shot guns. One of the gang, seeing Doc with the sheriff's party, made a play for his pistol, but the sheriff shoved his shotgun yet nearer the robber's face and said, softly, "Be quiet," and he was calm.

Young Pippin's success in this now celebrated case won for him the full confidence of the agency, and before he had reached Chicago other important work was mapped out for him, but to the surprise of the agency he refused to accept another assignment.

"I could not," he said to me, "the thought of living a life that was a lie—to appear always to be that which I was not—to mix and mingle constantly with the wicked of this world, in which there should be so much happiness. It is a great and important work which ought to be done, but it is not for me."

Returning to the west again Pippin entered the service of Uncle Sam as a railway postal clerk.

Finding a letter in the mail marked to me he took his blue pencil and wrote on the back of the envelope, "Hello—Doc—R. M. S. P." and I knew then that he was in the railway mail service.

It was some time after the receipt of this brief message that the meeting in the sleeping car, already referred to, occurred, and it was during his many visits to me at Denver that he related the detective stories herein related.

"How is it," I asked one day, "that you are assistant superintendent of the mail service in the west when you are under 30 and now, comparatively new, at the business?"

"Hard luck," said Doc, smiling sadly, congluing and thumping his chest.

Then it was he began to tell me some of his experiences in the postal car, but he did not tell them all. He was as modest as he was honest and would not tell me, his friend, the real tales of heroism in which he was himself the hero. He told enough, however, to cause me to find out more, and I learned that his loyalty, bravery and devotion to duty had been warmly commended in autograph letters from the highest officials in the mail service.

It was, indeed, hard luck that brought him promotion and an easy place. One night, when the train came roaring down the canyon, the engine jumped the track, the mail car went to pieces, the locomotive, the coaches piled upon the rocks, and the wreck began to burn. When the trainmen and passengers came forward to look for the fellows up ahead, they saw large and small envelopes sailing out of the burning debris, and they knew at once that the mail agent must be fast in the wreck. The whistle valve had been forced open, and now the wild, ceaseless cry of the wounded engine drowned all other sounds and made it impossible for the men to hear the cries of the imprisoned postal clerk. All this he knew, and while the hungry flames were eating their way to where he lay he pulled the register bag to him and began to shy the valuable mail out into the sagebrush.

When the steam was exhausted and the cry of the engine had faded, there came a sound from the engine, and for their voices were heard in the distance. Above the sound of the crackling flames they could hear the calling to them from his place below the wreck, and the brave train crew worked desperately right in the very face of the fire to rescue the unfortunate.

Gradually the voice of the prisoner grew fainter and fainter, and before the rescuers reached him it hushed entirely.

At last, just as they were about to give him up, as he was now apparently dead, they succeeded in dragging Doc from the wreck, and to the joy of all he soon revived. He was yet alive, but had breathed so much of the flames that his left lung was almost ruined, and he was never able to resume his place on the road.

It was this unfortunate wreck and the story of his heroism that gave him the important position of assistant clerk of the western division of the United States mail service when he was not yet 40 years old. It was the burn in his breast that made him cough and beat his left lung, that pinched his face and made his eyes look larger than they were. He went on silently, almost cheerfully, doing what he could, but we who watched knew that the hidden scar he had there was wearing his life away.

Not long ago I returned to Denver, and meeting the chief clerk in the street, asked him about Doc. I had been wandering over the face of the earth for nearly two years, and now as my friend looked at me his face took a sudden shade, and he answered slowly, "We buried Doc six months ago."

The Ghost Was Shy.

"Ha!" exclaimed Hamlet, starting. The wicked queen wrung her hands in a transport of agony.

"Mistake, I'd like to see a ghost walk," she cried.

But it was only to the melancholy Dane that the apparition was visible.

We should not think harshly of the queen for taking liberties with her lines, for she had received no salary for six weeks, and the thought of her husband at home crying for bread gnawed her to desperation.—Detroit Journal

Essentials of perfume, still fresh, and jars of pomade that had not lost its fragrance have been recovered from Heracleum and Pompell.

## CLEOPATRA'S MINES.

A London Diamond Merchant Thinks He Has Made a Discovery.

Somewhere in Egypt are the richest diamond mines in the world. When the fascinating Cleopatra was queen, these mines were a part of her possessions, and she kept a number of slaves constantly engaged in working them. Day by day, stored on by the taskmaster. The slaves sought for these rare gems, and each day the output of the mines was sent to the queen. This is a matter of history. So, too, is the fact that the beautiful Cleopatra had so many of these precious stones had in operation, and yet they disappeared as mysteriously as

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## "I was suffering with what the doctor called chronic indigestion, torpid liver

and vertigo," says Mrs. Martha B. Barham, of Newville, Prince George Co., Va.

"My symptoms were giddiness in the head, pains in my chest and an uneasy feeling all over."

"I was all run down, and could not do any work without suffering from nervous attacks. I wrote to you, and advised me to use Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery."

"I used five bottles of each, and I feel like a new woman."

health and strength. When I commenced to use the medicine I weighed only 115 pounds, now I weigh 140. My husband and friends all thought that I would die, but today I am a well woman."

Mrs. Barham's experience is not singular. Thousands have given similarly strong and convincing testimony. There are no other medicines in the world that have such a long and continuous record of cures.

There are no other medicines "just as good" or "just the same" as Doctor Pierce's. Like all valuable things these medicines are sometimes imitated, but they are imposed upon. See that you get what you ask for.

If you have any doubt as to the nature of your ailment write fully, giving your symptoms, to Dr. R. V. Pierce, Chief Consulting Physician, Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, Buffalo, N. Y. He will consider your case carefully, and will tell you, absolutely free of charge, what to do to get well.

RUM HELD THE FORT.

A Drunken Soldier Keeps a Garrison at Bay.

Nicholas Davis, a member of Troop B, Third United States Cavalry, created considerable excitement at Fort Myer and for several hours held the entire garrison at bay.

Davis is said to have been drinking to excess the fore part of the week, and the effect of the liquor was to lead him to the belief that the fort was being stormed by an enemy and it was his duty to defend it.

Every man who appeared in sight was taken by a target by the infuriated man, and in order to prevent any accidents all of the roads leading through the reservation were guarded.

Davis entered the troop quarters, 2333 the Washington Star, and with a Krag Jorgensen rifle kept a watch on all sides. There was plenty of ammunition at hand for him, and he was free in his shots.

The fortifications were almost impregnable against attack, except with danger of loss of life attending the capture. All efforts to entice him out were unavailing, and he held the fort in spite of the various subterfuges employed in the endeavor to get him to surrender.

The soldiers of the garrison, upon orders from Captain Broughton, commanding Troop B, attempted to smoke him out, but this plan failed.

Several soldiers who were well acquainted with Davis, including his "bunkie," started to walk up the stairs to the place where he was holding forth, but he refused to recognize them and menacingly thrust the muzzle of his rifle in their direction, causing a general scamper to cover.

Captain Broughton himself attempted to conciliate him, but he could do nothing. After all endeavors to dislodge him from his position and the waste of several hours of time, it is said, it was decided to shoot him dead.

A sergeant of the guard was instructed to secure a detail for this purpose. The guard secured a point of vantage and waited for Davis to appear at one of the windows of the company house.

He was very shrewd and only showed the top of his head when taking aim. A chance was finally offered, and two soldiers fired at him. He was seen to disappear, and for the time it was thought he had been shot through the head.

Some of the men started up the stairs after the officer, but they were alarmed by his heavy footsteps as he paced the floor above.

Captain Broughton finally entered the room and fearlessly ordered Davis to come down stairs and receive attention from the doctor. Edging his way, he finally managed to grasp the rifle, and in a short time Davis was subdued.

He had not been struck when fired upon, but the bullet, however, struck the stock of his rifle and splintered it, some of the flying particles of wood being imbedded in his face. It required the combined efforts of four men to take him to the hospital.

Where Tigers Fear Men.

A cheerful place is Saranapour, in India. The rainfall there often is as great in one afternoon in the rainy season as it is in New York state in a whole year.

It is in New York state in a whole year as plentiful as dogs are on New York's east side.

On account of the tremendous dampness the cattle have to be driven to the top of the hills, so that they shall not get their feet too wet, and the tigers and leopards climb to these high altitudes also, because they are imbued with the kindly desire to save those cattle from pneumonia and other ills by eating them carefully and with due enjoyment.

As there are no forests on the hills the tigers prowl about all night in the open, lying concealed during the day in the limestone caves, the coal pits and between the crevices of the rocks.

The residents come upon them in all manner of odd nooks and corners so unexpectedly that the beasts are as much surprised as themselves, and usually scamper in one direction, the disturbers lying in the opposite one.

No one winks out at nighttime without a powerful lantern or torch, for as a rule, wild beasts will not come near a light, though this rule does not hold good in all cases.—New York Herald.

There is a Class of People

Who are injured by the use of coffee. Recently there has been placed in all the grocery stores a new preparation called GRAIN-O, made of pure grains that takes the place of coffee.

The most delicate stomach receives it without distress, and but few can tell it from coffee. It does not cost over a cent, and it is most gratifying with great benefit. The 3c per package. Try it. Ask for GRAIN-O.

The B. & O. R. R.